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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FIRST COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN*

Note by the Administrator

I. PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. The preparatory process of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen coincided with an extremely challenging period in the modern history of this country. The unification of the former Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen on 22 May 1990, as well as the adoption of the political and socio-economic principles for the unified country establishing political pluralism, a market economy and freedom of the press, created significant possibilities for human development in Yemen. In order to address the needs of this transformation, Yemen has concentrated on better management of its development, conducted intensive policy debate and actively sought international advice and assistance.

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* On 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen merged to form a single sovereign State called the Republic of Yemen. Previous notes on the country programmes for the Yemen Arab Republic were issued under the symbols DP/CP/YEM/NOTE/1-4; previous notes on the country programmes for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen were issued under the symbols DP/CP/PDY/NOTE/1-4.

2. After unification, the task for UNDP became to define the most appropriate entry level and entry points for its cooperation. The challenging situation offered an opportunity of moving UNDP planned cooperation "upstream", towards the level of strategy and policy formulation, administrative and procedural reform, preparation of country-wide development programmes, facilitation of Yemen's policy discussions with the donors and aid coordination. Since May 1990, various sectoral interventions assisted the Government in formulating its development objectives, priorities and guiding principles for the future national development plan; at the same time, UNDP, supporting some of these interventions, relied on those emerging objectives and priorities for the purpose of country programming. This mutually reinforcing process will continue and the adoption of the open, programme-oriented approach to country programming in Yemen constitutes an adequate and flexible framework for mapping out future UNDP activities in the country.

3. The first country programme for the Republic of Yemen is the result of close cooperation between the Government and UNDP. The main forum for discussions with the Government with respect to the content of the programme was the Joint Steering Committee established at the beginning of 1991, and comprising the Ministry of Planning and Development and UNDP. The UNDP high-level programming mission fielded in September 1991, and the preparation, presentation and endorsement by the Government of the UNDP advisory note, provided the programming exercise with the necessary focus. Other United Nations bodies and agencies present in Yemen, the World Bank, as well as bilateral donors were engaged with UNDP in a series of formal and informal discussions of Yemen's needs as well as goals and modalities for external assistance. In addition, UNDP engaged in programme reviews and strategy development with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

4. Furthermore, the Government and UNDP benefited in the country programming process from impact studies conducted by the World Bank and various United Nations bodies and agencies after the Persian Gulf crisis. The programming exercise also took into account the conclusions and recommendations of the National Population Conference, the Human Resources Development Symposium, the National Conference on Sustainable Development, the National Conference on Disaster Mitigation, and the National Conference and Workshops on water, all of which were conducted in 1991. Macro-economy, social development, nutrition, human settlements, environment, water, agriculture, energy, industry, mineral resources and civil aviation were subjects of recent studies, overviews and evaluations conducted by the Government, United Nations bodies and agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors. Preparations for the round-table conference and the Management Development Programme missions also contributed to the whole process.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

5. The first country programme for Yemen adopted four areas of concentration:

(a) Strategic planning will be pursued by the Government with the overall aim of sustaining the viability and acceptable growth rates of the economy; assuring reasonable level of well-being for the population; integrating Yemen into the world economy and gradually making it less dependent on aid and subsidies; and mobilizing resources, including external aid;

(b) Management development will be pursued by the Government in realization of the need to efficiently use Yemen's limited resources and to avail itself of the opportunity of merging the administrative structures of the country's two predecessor republics in order to streamline administration and procedures thus helping to eliminate public and private waste in development efforts at all levels;

(c) Human development is placed very high on the Government's list of priorities in view of the existence in Yemen of seriously disadvantaged population groups, especially in rural areas, and generally low social indicators in the country; and

(d) Natural resources management which is considered by the Government as the key to future development, especially in view of the extent of environmental degradation, the water crisis and general underdevelopment of mineral resources.

6. As mentioned above, the most important strategic decision in this programme is to go very much "upstream" in the national capacity-building effort. In a sense this programme is mainly about national development strategies and policies, administrative structures and procedures, and high-level policy dialogues between Yemen and the outside world. It is tying UNDP to the Government's effort to create higher quality in the management of development in Yemen.

7. The most upstream activities will include, inter alia, the round-table conference scheduled for May 1992 and the follow-up process which will enhance the process of preparing the national development plan. The Management Development Programme will aim at improved governance through creating a large pool of advice concerning administrative reform in the country which will affect both administrative structures and procedures.

8. Support to the implementation of the adopted policies will constitute the next important point of UNDP intervention. It will be conducted in selected areas through: (i) cooperation in translating these policies into viable programmes and projects; (ii) technical cooperation and direct support with respect to their implementation; (iii) streamlining various structures and procedures as a result of Management Development Programme activities;

(iv) cooperation in the mobilization of additional aid; (v) support to external aid coordination; and (vi) making available data to support policy choices and to enhance the capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate programmes and projects.

9. A small selected group of institutions and sectors will also be assisted. These will include: the Central Statistics Organization and the national statistical network; national management training institutions; vocational training schools; local units of decentralized administration; employment and income generation; and the private sector through the promotion of a legal, economic and administrative environment conducive to enhanced private investment.

10. The timing of selected interventions foreseen in the country programme remains crucial for the whole operation. They will be arranged in such a way as to support the absorptive and response capacity of the Government vis-à-vis the national planning process throughout 1992. This approach will be maintained also in the post-transitional period starting in 1993 when the various policy and reform targets should be coming through the legislative and parliamentary process.

11. Large areas of programmed cooperation are presently interlinked. At the same time, the round-table Conference process and the national development planning process will further develop the content of subprogrammes formulated under the present four areas of concentration in the country programme. Full attention will be given to maintaining and even strengthening such linkages between: strategic planning and human development; management development and administrative and economic efficiency; better management of national resources and improved external assistance mobilization; and rational population planning and water management and the elimination of constraints to strategic development planning.

III. MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

12. In the management of the first country programme for Yemen full consideration will be given to lessons learned during the previous cycle, namely: that the Government and UNDP must not overload the capacity of either partner; that the preconditions for successful interventions are identified and agreed between the Government and UNDP beforehand; and that UNDP resources are concentrated on specific opportunities where a comparative advantage assures sustainable impact.

13. UNDP will aim at the formulation and implementation of cooperative efforts and, where applicable, at the mobilization of resources with full participation of the beneficiaries. In many areas, this will involve work at the community level with the full participation of women and families. The private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will also be involved in implementation. National execution will be promoted gradually within the larger objective of enhanced national management of development.

14. The existing mechanisms established between the Government and UNDP for policy and project formulation and programme monitoring and evaluation, as well as between the Government, UNDP and other donors for aid coordination, are considered adequate and will be continued. Similarly, the very effective cooperation which was established with the World Bank and various United Nations system bodies and agencies during the policy review and strategy development phase will be maintained at the programme and project implementation stage.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

15. The first country programme for the Republic of Yemen addresses a unique set of priorities and development opportunities created by the unification of two least developed countries (LDCs). The country programme will assist in the nation-building process at a relatively early stage and thus has the opportunity to cooperate in support of this process through sustainable and fully integrated development. It also gives UNDP the opportunity to associate itself with the Government in the effort to facilitate the unification process. The country programme thus remains fully in line with Yemen's national objectives and development priorities.

16. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen.